I am Walt Barnes offering testimony tonight on behalf of Jackson Township, Tioga County PA Supervisors and also as a partner in Maple Knoll Farm.

Jackson Township has approximately one quarter of our households on a 5 year old sewer system. 370 homes and businesses are in the system. The engineering design firm assured us our plant would exceed all requirements at the time of construction. If the passage of Senator Cardin's Bill, S1816 is enforced, we will be forced to remodel our sewer plant to meet the proposed additional regulations. The costs to our residence for this plant is currently $10,000/ household at $32 / household / month for a 45 year loan with the total cost of 3.8 million for construction. Our residents are not wealthy, many are on social security, with no cost of living increase for the second year and any retirement savings having shrunk drastically, we can not raise our rates to update the sewer plant. We ask EPA to look and see what we have accomplished in our township to clear up the bay and give us time to get the present plant paid for.

Representing Maple Knoll Farm, a partnership between my sons and myself, we milk 200 cows on a modern day dairy farm which lies in Steuben County, New York and Tioga County, Pennsylvania. We farm 700 acres between both states. The land we farm is both owned and rented. The proposed buffer requirement of 150' from any water source would restrict us from planting 37.4 acres of cropland. We live on a hilltop with few creeks or streams near the farm. Essentially this is limiting how we can farm ground that does not run into a creek or stream. And it is this ground that pays us to farm, not income off the farm. Many articles concerning the need for the proposed restrictions discuss the faults of the computer model of the bay clean-up project. I believe the computer model had not looked at the agriculture community in the last 30 years. With limited funding, especially dairy farm income, farms have cut nitrogen and phosphorus applications and have been able to limit the sediment from entering our waterways and moving into the Chesapeake Bay. We began playing a role in reducing fertilizer and sediment erosion over 37 years ago on our farm with common practices such as minimum tillage and cover crop planting. We cut our Urea usage 50% per acre of corn by changing our farming practices. We leave corn stalks in the field, after the grain is combined, to prevent runoff of sediment. We utilize contour strip cropping, systematic rotation of crops and now no-till planting to further control runoff of sediment. Our fertilizer is mechanically placed 2" below the soil surface in the seed row during planting which limits the amount of surface fertilizer that could potentially runoff in the event of a rainstorm. With no-till practices, the soil is not disturbed and nitrogen does not volatilize after planting. Our sidedress application of nitrogen is done when the corn is 12" tall and applied in the late evening when the corn plant is actively growing and the roots are able to uptake the fertilizer more rapidly. This limits the amount of nitrogen that is able to move from placement in the soil.

Before EPA asks the dairy farmer to accept unreasonable proposals, EPA should look beyond their computer model and see what the agriculture community has done to curtail runoff of sediment at the present time. And then go look at their favorite golf course or talk with a local landscape company and check their fertilizer program for keeping the golf course greens green and landscaped yards growing beautifully. Or consider the local airport that is busily deicing planes during the snow events of winter. Where is this runoff going? Down the drains and straight to the bay.

One more item that I would like to touch on is sedimentation. Drive south of our present location along state route 328 and note the vast areas of the creek bank that have and are washing away into the bay. This creek has 100 year old trees that have fallen to their death and washed down stream because of the lack of attention to creek bank erosion. Repair the stream banks and maintain them and then monitor the amount of erosion and sediment going into the bay and you will find that there is a substantial decrease in sediment floating downstream. In order to clean up the bay, start looking at where the water flows and then work up stream because the problem does not start from the top down.

Thank you,
Walt Barnes
Jackson Township Supervisor, Partner – Maple Knoll Farm